RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 25th November, 1986/4 Agrahayana, 1908 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock. **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*301. [*The questioner (Shri Aladi Aruna alias V. Arunachalam) was absent. For answer vide col..... infra.*]

Closure of mines

†*302. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the mines which had been closed down in different States due to stoppage of export of iron ore during the last two years;

(b) the amount of losses incurred as a result thereof and the number of workers affected thereby; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to reopen the closed mines?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Exports of iron ore in the last three years have increased as follows:—

(Million tonnes)

1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
21.95	25.40	27.96 (Provisional)

According to statutory returns on closure of mines received by Indian Bureau of Mines, no mines have closed down due to stoppage of exports in the last two years.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Sir, may I know how many mines have been closed down on account of some other reasons?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many mines have been closed down?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, the thrust of the question was with reference to the stoppage of exports and how many mines have been closed down as a result of that. But the honourable Member is now asking, perhaps, about other than exports. I would like to submit that in 1984, 20 mines were closed and four were closed in 1985. The reasons are either due to expiry of leases or exhaustion of ore in the mines or temporary closures due to monsoon and other technical reasons.

DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister be kind enough to let us know when these mines will be reopened?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, the House is aware that the leasing is granted under the Mines and Minerals (Development) Act, 1957. The lessees are either the public sector undertakings or private individuals as well. The information as to when exactly these lessees would be opening these mines is not available with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Vijaya Mohan Reddy:

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Sir, I congratulate the Government for stopping export of iron ore during the last two years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, the exports of iron ore in the last three years

†Previously Starred Question 162, transferred from the 14th November, 1986.

have increased from 25.40 to 27.96 million tonnes. Now, Professor Ramachandra Rao.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: No, Sir.

M. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Reddy, you have lost your right to put a supplementary.

PROF. B. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, is it a fact that the export earnings on iron ore are less than the cost of production in the case of iron ore specifically, especially from the Visakhapatnam port?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, it is not necessarily so because, so far as exports are concerned, there is no doubt, for the purposes of the countries which are importing, particularly Japan and Korea, some concession is given—when the MMTC has entered into contract with them—to the tune of 1.5 dollars per tonne so that the exports increase from Paradip port, and this is what has happened.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Sir, the export is also done by private lessees. That is one. Secondly, by closing down of mines, how many people have you been able to unemploy and what has happened to them?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, the first part of the question is whether private owners are also exporting. Now this is with reference to Goa where, because of historical reasons, certain persons were given the leases and they have for a long time been having contract with some countries for the purpose of export—for example, Japan, Korea, etc.—and it is only those parties who are allowed to export. Otherwise it is canalized for export through the MMTC.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: What fraction is that?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: I do not know but it is a very minor fraction. Now, on the other question of labour, the submission that I would like to make is, I am only concerned with exports and imports. Now, about the reasons other than exports I have brought to the notice of the House and how many mines have been closed down. That is a matter on which I do not have information.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Mr. Chairman, is it a fact that in the harbours there is no sufficient space for bringing bigger ships and as such our export of iron-ore has been hampered?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: It is particularly true of the Paradeep Port, Sir, that we had been trying to increase its capacity. In fact, the best port is Madras where 130,000 DWT capacity ships can come. Of course, it is an endeavour of the Government to increase the capacity of all the ports, Visakhapatnam, Madras and Paradeep.

Thefts of Passports

*303. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported theft of Passports of Indian visitors to the United States during the third week of September, 1986; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to check such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALLIRO): (a) The Government has not come across complaints of any large scale theft of passports of Indian visitors to USA during the third week of September, 1986. However,